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ABSTRACT

Studies in several relatively low-population, rural states in the 1970s show few differences in the types of state legislative races in which men and women are nominated and how well they do at the ballot box. This study increases knowledge of the role of gender in state legislative campaigns, geographically and over time, by exploring the comparative electoral experience of male and female candidates for state legislative office in a more urban setting in the 1980s. It expands the range of subject matter by considering women candidates' presence, primary campaign experiences, and fundraising. The data show that few women have run for office in the Massachusetts House of Representatives in the 1980s, but those who have run have done so strategically and with a comparable rate of success with male candidates. A gender gap does exist in campaign contributions to male candidates' advantage, but this has not kept women candidates from achieving equality at the ballot box. (Author)

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GENDER AND CAMPAIGNS FOR THE STATE LEGISLATURE
IN AN URBAN SETTING

ABSTRACT

Studies in several relatively small-population and rural states in the 1970s show few differences in the types of state legislative races in which men and women are nominated and how well they do at the ballot box. This study extends our knowledge of the role of gender in state legislative campaigns, geographically and over time by exploring the comparative electoral experience of male and female candidates for state legislative office in a more urban setting in the 1980s. It expands the the range of subject matter by considering women candidates' presence, primary campaign experiences, and fundraising. The data show that few women have run for offfice in the Massachusetts House of Representatives in the 1980s, but those who have run have done so strategically and with a comparable rate of success with male candidates. A gender gap does exist in campaign contributions to male candidates' advantage, but this has not kept women candidates from achieving equality at the ballot box.

Voters are prejudiced against women candidates. The parties nominate women only in districts hopeless for their candidates. Women candidates lack access to financial networks, thus they cannot raise the same kinds of money as male candidates. Women in general lack the resources (and perhaps the savvy) to run adequate campaigns. So has gone the conventional wisdom regarding the role of gender in political campaigns. In the past, too, journalists and political scientists have stressed the obstacles to women's candidacies.[1] But more recent empirical studies show that gender has become less of a factor, at least in races for legislative office, once we control for incumbency and party. This trend has been particularly striking at the Congressional level.[2] Studies in several relatively small-population and rural states in the 1970s show few differences in the types of state legislative races in which men and women are nominated and how well they do at the ballot box.[3]

This paper extends this systematic look at the relative state legislative campaign experiences of male and female candidates. It explores the comparative electoral experience of male and female candidates for state legislative office in a more urban setting in the 1980s. It expands the focus from the general election stage of the process back to include primary campaigns, and it considers the important question of the presence of women candidates, as well as what happens when they run. The focus is on races for the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1980 through 1988.

Little systematic analysis of the role of gender in state

legislative contests in the 1980s has been carried out, although we know that nationally the numbers of women lawmakers have increased with each electoral cycle. We might expect women candidates to begin even to outpace male candidates in similar situations as equality and resource networks expand, and women are seen as offering fresh perspectives. Indeed, in her "feminization of power" campaign, Eleanor Smeal, former president of the National Organization for Women, argues that "with all other factors in the candidacies of a man and woman being equal, a woman has a 3 to 15 percent better chance of winning."[4] The problem according to Smeal is that few women run for public office.

Women's campaign experiences may also vary across states. Previous research has found women's presence in state legislatures to be related to political culture,[5] socio-economic environment,[6] and the population of states.[7] The availability of relatively low status political offices increases the percentages of women in state houses of representatives.

Diamond's research found that the percentage of women in state legislatures varied inversely with the degree of competition for office and the lucrativeness of the position.[8] Competition refers to the size of the legislature relative to the population of the state which conditions the opportunity structure. The more house seats per 100,000 population, the more women were likely to hold some proportion of those seats. A related proposition was that since competition is likely to be more intense when the rewards are greater, the percentage of the legislature consisting of women will vary inversely with

legislative salaries. Thus, we would expect to find a smaller percentage of the legislature to be female in the larger states where opportunities are lower and salaries higher than in low population states.[9] The states with the highest percentage of women state legislators in 1986 were New Hampshire, Vermont, Wyoming, Colorado and Washington,[10] relatively small population states with low-paying, part-time legislatures. Indeed, systematic research has shown that higher population states are unfavorable contexts for women's legislative recruitment,[11] although Diamond found increasing proportions of women candidates from urban areas over time.[12]

Diamond's thesis deals with the comparative outcome of state legislative elections. This paper's concern is with the impact of gender in campaign experiences which contribute to variations in women's membership in state legislatures. Studies of the relative campaign experiences of male and female candidates have not included any large urban states. (Nor has the northeast been represented.) Women candidates may be disadvantaged in such environments, or women may be less likely to become candidates. A combination of these factors--scarcity of women candidates and prejudice against those who do run--could account for the lower percentages of state legislators who are women in more populous states.

To explore this process, we examine the presence and the experience of women candidates for the Massachusetts House of Representatives both in primary and general elections from 1980 through 1988. How many women ran for the legislature? In what

types of races did they run? What percentage of the vote did they tend to obtain relative to male candidates in comparable situations, and was their success rate equal to that of male candidates? What effect did gender have on the raising and spending of campaign funds?

The Massachusetts Political Context

A 1986 front page Boston Globe article suggested that Massachusetts was inhospitable to women politicians. It noted that the state lagged behind most of the nation in electing women to statewide office and "trail[ed] most of New England in voting women candidates into legislative offices." It concluded that the major obstacles women candidates in Massachusetts faced were problems with public attitudes, political parties, and money.[13] This was the conventional wisdom that this paper empirically tests.

Although seats in the Masschusetts General Court are coveted, very little party competition exists for them because of Democratic Party dominance in the state and the advantages of incumbency. As Burnham has described it, "there is today probably no state in the union in which the Republican Party is organizationally or electorally in such bad shape as Massachusetts".[14] Republicans composed an average 19 percent of the House membership during this decade. Further, in each of these elections over 1/2 of the seats were won by default in the general election, there being only one candidate. In 1988, for example, the figure was 63 percent. (More incumbents were defeated in primaries then in general elections during this time

period.)

Despite incumbent advantage and the onesidedness of so many contests for the Massachusetts House of Representatives, women have increased their membership with each election throughout the 1980s, going from 8 percent in 1981 to 19% in 1987. This trend was reversed in 1988 when 3 women incumbents were defeated and only two new women were elected. Table 1 shows the presence of women lawmakers by party over this time period.

Table 1. Membership, Massachusetts House of Representatives, by Party and Sex, 1980-1988

Year	Democrats			Republicans		
	Men	Women	%	Men	Women	%
1980	121	8	(6)	25	6	(19)
1982	118	13	(10)	23	6	(21)
1984	114	20	(15)	18	8	(31)
1986	105	22	(17)	24	9	(27)
1988	106	22	(17)	24	8	(25)

The fact that Massachusetts lagged behind the other New England states in the percentage of its state legislators who were women contributed to the Globe's assessment of its being a negative political environment for women politicians. This is really a misleading comparison. The other New England states are not nearly as urban and industrialized as Massachusetts. According to Diamond's hypotheses, cited in the introduction, we should expect women to have a more difficult time winning seats in the Masachusetts General Court compared with their counterparts in the other new England states. The seats-to-

population ratio is much smaller in Massachusetts, and its legislature enjoys a more professional status. A Massachusetts legislative seat is much more lucrative. If we compare the percentage of women in the Massachusetts House of Representatives with other high salary states, a different picture emerges regarding the receptivity of the state to women politicians (Table 2). In 1987, Massachusetts ranked first in the percentage of its legislators who were women among states with annual salaries of $30,000 or more.

Table 2. Legislative Salaries over $30,000 and Percentage of Female House Members

State	Salary	Percentage Female Members
Alaska	46,800	6.7
California	33,732	16.3
Illinois	32,500	16.9
Massachusetts	30,000	19.4
Michigan	36,500	18.2
New York	43,000	11.3
Ohio	31,659	13.1
Pennsylvania	35,000	7.1

Salaries from The Book of the States, 1986
Percentage female members obtained from Center for the American Woman and Politics, "Women in State Legislatures 1988."

This first-place status is particularly intriguing since in the past, state legislative election studies showed Democratic Party dominance to negatively impact on women's electoral involvement.[15] (Recent studies, however, have shown that no longer to be the case.[16]) Of the women newly elected to the Massachusetts House in these five contests, 13 were Democrats and 4 were Republicans. At the same time, women have been a greater percentage of the small number of Republicans serving in the

legislature (Table 1).

Women now compose nineteen percent of the overall House membership. This is is far from equal representation. To understand that inequality, we examine the effort women have made to increase their legislative presence, and the response of voters and campaign contributers to that effort.

Women's Campaign Presence

Women's presence as legislative office-seekers involves both their numbers within the overall pool of candidates and the types of races they have entered compared to male candidates. The strategic nature of their entrance into the electoral arena is important to consider. It has been argued that if more women run, more women will get elected. But it is not just a matter of running. It is also a matter of strategy. Not all electoral situations present the same opportunity. Women candidates need to contest races where the potential for victory is reasonable. If they "are more likely than their male contemporaries to be slated against incumbents or in other non-winnable races, then this will effectively keep women out of the legislatures, no matter how well they do relative to similar men."[17] In this section we determine the numbers of women candidates and the strategic nature of their campaigns for the Massachusetts House.

Numbers. The number of female candidates rose substantially in the first 3 elections of the decade and then contracted in the latter two campaigns. Including both primary and general election contests, the number of women candidates was 27 (1980), 45 (1982), 68 (1984), 52 (1986) and 51 (1988). The numbers of

male candidates also declined in the latter two elections. Therefore, female candidates' percentage of the total pool of candidates did not decrease. Women represented an average 16 percent of all candidates during this time period: (8% (1980), 13% (1982), 18% (1984), 17% (1986), and 18% (1988). (They maintained a similar presence among nonincumbent office-seekers.)

Women's presence in these elections is small, never reaching as much as 20 percent of the total candidate pool. No figures are available for other states for this time period for a comparative analysis. But these numbers do compare favorably with the 10 percent presence Welch et al. report from their study of elections in 6 states in the 1970s.[18] But we do not know whether this is a function of time or context.

Strategy. To examine the conditions under which men and women run, we analyze the types of races male and female candidates entered. Men were slightly more likely to have primary opposition (51%) than the women candidates (48%). (Among new candidates only, neither sex was advantaged in having no primary opposition (Table 3).) But female candidates were much more likely to have general election opposition (68%) than the male candidates (52%). This is accounted for by men's greater incumbency status. It is almost always incumbents who run unopposed.

Party differences were prominent in primary contests among new candidates. Republicans had few contested primaries reflecting their minority status, and gender differences were virtually nonexistent within that party. Primary contests were a distinctive feature of the Democratic Party, and gender

differences work to the advantage of the female contestants. They were more likely to contest open seat primaries, the most opportune situations for newcomers and less likely to challenge their own party's incumbents than their male counterparts.

Table 3. Types of Primaries and General Elections New Male and Female Candidates Entered by Party,

Primaries	Against Incumbent %	Contested Open Seat %	No Opponent %	Opposition Party* %	N
Republican					
Male	3	22	71	4	215
Female	2	22	73	2	41
Democrat					
Male	42	42	10	5	521
Female	31	58	8	2	86

General Election	Against Incumbent %	Contested Open Seat %	No Opponent %	N
Republican				
Male	75	25	(N=1)	161
Female	64	36	---	36
Democrat				
Male	38	50	13	120
Female	26	67	7	27

*Opposition party to face an incumbent in the general election.

Open Seats. Women's presence in open seat contests is the key strategic measure of their efforts to increase their representation in the state legislature. Open seat districts tend to generate multi-candidate primary contests which makes this first stage of the campaign process a crucial arena, sometimes the only one in a one-party dominated state.

During this time period incumbents did not seek re-election

in 81 districts. Sixty-eight women entered primary contests for these seats, 17% of the total pool of such candidates. This percentage compares favorably with women's overall presence as legislative candidates. But at the same time, the electorate had the opportunity to choose a woman in only a minority of all the open seat races in which a party ran a candidate. Women were on the ballot in 24% of the open seat races in 1980, 37% in 1982, 39% in 1984, 26% in 1986, and 41% in 1988. No trends toward an increasing presence emerged.

In general election contests, party and gender differences were notable among new candidates regarding their status as challengers or open seat contenders (Table 3). Reflecting their minority status, the majority of new Republican candidates ran against incumbents, male candidates more than female candidates. These figures dispute any notion that female Republican candidates are primarily recruited to run in hopeless situations for the party. The same is true for the Democrats. At the same time, a larger percentage of new women candidates were open seat nominees than their male counterparts.

Women's campaigns for the Massachusetts House of Representatives are characterized by the smallness of the numbers of women candidates but not by the tokenism of the entrance of those who have run as measured by the types of races they have entered. Presence is crucial. "If you don't run, you surely lose,"[19] and where you run is equally as important. The key, however, is what happens when you do run. Do women candidates fare as well as male candidates with the voters?

We address this question by examining the relative performance of women candidates to that of male candidates in similar situations. Performance is measured first by the win/loss rates for similarly situated male and female candidates. Secondly, we examine the average percent of the vote obtained. Does the nomination of a woman candidate depress a party's votes, make no difference, or enhance its position at the polls?

As Table 4 shows, male and female candidates have remarkably similar win/loss records. Women in all status categories are just as successful as their male colleagues. In some categories they have even compiled a better win/loss record, for example, in open seat races. Democratic female open seat candidates won 82 percent of their races compared with 76 percent of their male colleagues. Twenty-five percent of the Republican female open-seat contestants were victorious while only 21 percent of their male counterparts won their contests. Nearly all male and female incumbents were re-elected. Women incumbents were no more likely to face general election opposition. Female challengers have compiled the same losing record as male challengers. These findings vary little across the years.

Table 4. General Election Success Rate by Party, Type of Race, and Sex, 1980-1988

	Democrats # Running/ # Winning		Republicans # Running/ # Winning		Independents # Running/ # Winning	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Challenged Incumbents	153/148	24/23	43/42	16/15	--	--
Challengers	53/1	7/1	120/3	20/1	38/1	10/1
Contested Open Seats	63/48	17/14	52/11	12/3	27/0	3/0
Unopposed Incumbents	340	47	59	13		
Open Seats	15	1	1	--		

Winning is of utmost importance. But vote-gathering ability is of related significance. This we measured by the mean percent of the vote obtained by male and female candidates. As Table 5 shows, gender made virtually no difference in the average percentage of the vote a group obtained in the various status categories. Male and female candidates were remarkably similar in their drawing power at the polls. Also analysis by individual years showed no trends within the groups. It was not the case that female candidates began the decade at a disadvantage and closed the gender gap during the decade. It is also interesting to note that the parties obtained no gains by running a woman against an incumbent.

Table 5. Mean Percentage of the Vote, Male and Female General Election Candidates, by Party and Status, 1980-1988

		Democrats		Republicans	
		Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %
Challenged Incumbents	N=	68 153	68 23	63 45	63 17
Challengers	N=	37 54	37 7	31 121	33 23
Open Seat	N=	61 62	57 17	40 50	41 12

Although we have found that female candidates were not disadvantaged at the polls in this urban state, differences may exist within the state. Women candidates may do especially well in the suburban and more rural areas of the state which is then offset by disadvantages in the cities. This possibility is based on our original hypothesis regarding the relationship between population and gender bias. Women candidates may also do as well as male candidates because they tend to run disproportionately in the less urban areas. To test the impact of urbanness on the electoral status of women we divided districts according to the population of the towns (or sections of cities) comprising them--less than 10,000, between 10,000 and 29,999, between 30,000 and 99,999 and 100,000 and over, [20] and correlated this measure of urbanization with presence and success of women candidates, and with their vote power compared to male candidates.

With the district as the unit of analysis, a negative but not particularly large relationship exists between the urbanness of of districts and both the presence of women candidates in primaries (Tau-c=-.09) and in general elections (Tau-c=.17), and

their success rates. (Tau-c=-.17 for primary success and -.10 for general election success.)[21] Women were more likely to enter and win contests in less populous districts.

However, the relationship becomes more complicated when we examine how well women candidates do compared to male candidates within each of these types of districts. With percentage of the vote obtained in contested general elections as the dependent variable and controlling for incumbency, female candidates out-polled male candidates in the more urban districts, while the reverse is true in the less urban areas. However, the differences were very small, and in no instance were they statistically significant (Table 6). Thus, both the overall urban nature of the state and urban setting within the state do not prejudice women's campaign experiences.

Table 6. Gender and Vote Totals by Urbanness of District

District	N	Percentage Vote Difference
Rural (<10,000)	26	-2
Small Town (10-29,999)	264	-1
Medium (30-99,999)	194	+3
Large City (100,000+)	86	+.4

The figures are unstandardized regression coefficients for gender with controls for incumbency following Welch, et al., "The Effect of Candidate Gender on Electoral Outcomes in State Legislative Races," Western Political Quarterly, 1985.

Open Seat Primaries. As stated earlier, open seats provide the most realistic opportunity for an underrepresented group to increase their numbers in the legislature. Open seat races also generate the most hotly contested primaries. In addition, in a one-party state winning the primary is often tantamount to

winning the seat. This stage of the process may create the greatest difficulty for women since they cannot count on the party apparatus or identification to help them. Previous research has suggested as much,[22] although little empirical research has examined the reality of this point. (Bernstein has shown that female Congressional candidates have become less successful at winning open seat primary races.)[23]

In these 5 elections, 304 men and 68 women were open seat primary contestants. (Forty-three men and 9 women were unopposed for their party's nomination, mainly Republicans.) In contested open seat primary races, female candidates clearly outpaced their male colleagues. Thirty-five percent of the female entrants in such contests won compared with only 23 percent of the men.[24]

These figures run counter to other findings that have stressed the disadvantages women face in primaries. Women candidates maintained a slightly greater presence in open seat primaries than in the overall election pool, and they were more successful than their male counterparts. Consequently, primary outcomes do not disproportionately account for the minority presence of women in the state legislature.

Campaign Financing

A disadvantage in fundraising has long been considered a major factor in women's inability to gain public office across the nation, not just in Massachusetts, and at various levels of government. However, contrary to conventional wisdom, empirical evidence shows that women candidates' fundraising ability in Congressional general elections equals that of their male

counterparts,[25] and this has been true for a number of years. Virtually no research has examined the relative financial bases of male and female state legislative candidates.[26] On the one hand, since state legislative campaigns tend to be less expensive, we would expect to find no differences between the funding of men's and women's campaigns if women can raise equal amounts in the more expensive and prominent Congressional races. On the other hand, the nature of Congressional races may be such that only a few politically savvy women run. Their experiences may not generalize to women candidates seeking lower level offices.

Also we need to keep in mind that the nature of state legislative campaigns is quite variable across states, from mainly low-budget, "friends and neighbors" types of campaigns to highly professional, costly endeavors. The magnitude of campaign spending in state legislative contests varies greatly among states. For example, in 1980, the average cost of a legislative seat in Alaska was $60,778 compared with $15,882 in Minnesota.[27] The average cost of winning a state senate or assembly seat in California in 1982 has been estimated at $429,000.[28]

Receipts and Expenditures. Since we have already shown equality in vote gathering ability between the sexes in these elections, our concern is not with a disparity in fundraising contributing to a disparity at the ballot box. Rather the question becomes did the women candidates achieve this equality in votes with equal amounts of money, less money, or more money?

Table 7 describes the financial picture for 1982 through

1986 in Massachusetts. Receipts and expenditures steadily increased over these elections. Candidates in contested general elections raised a median $7,856 in 1982. This increased to a median $19,975 in 1984, and jumped to $23,033 in 1986. The comparable expenditure figures are $6,714 (1982), $10,621 (1984), $20,496 (1986).

In 1982, the female candidates raised a larger median amount of money than their male counterparts while the men outspent them slightly. (The average--as opposed to the median-- amount raised was also greater for the male candidates.) In 1984 and 1986, the women candidates lagged behind the male candidates, although the differences certainly were not overwhelming. Further, the correlation between sex and campaign receipts is less than .10 and statistically nonsignificant in each of the elections.

Table 7. Median Receipts and Expenditures, Male and Female Candidates, 1982-1986

		Receipts		Expenditures	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
1982		$ 9,235	$10,573	$ 8,909	$8,010
	N=	(102)	(20)	(102)	(20)
1984		$11,373	$10,218	$10,800	$10,218
	N=	(97)	(31)	(97)	(31)
1986		$23,788	$20,591	$20,565	$17,501
	N=	(75)	(16)	(75)	(16)

Controlling for party and candidate status, (Tables 8 and 9), produces mixed findings regarding the relationship between gender and campaign financing. In 8 of the groups, men raised mo...

money than the women candidates, and in 9 categories the women did better.[29] The small numbers of female office-seekers in many of the groups preclude definitive statements. The findings do suggest though that the women candidates are not handicapped by the lack of money which the poll results reflect. In fact, their fundraising ability appears impressive. It leads us to speculate how well women candidates would do if they were to raise more money than their male colleagues.

Table 8. Median Receipts, Male and Female Candidates by Party and Status, 1982-1986

	Democrats		Republicans	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Incumbents				
1982	$15,269	$13,794	$ 8,130	$9,804
N=	(37)	(1)	(7)	(3)
1984	14,525	13,130	12,394	9,790
N=	(31)	(7)	(10)	(2)
1986	23,033	25,949	31,529	16,526
N=	(19)	(5)	(11)	(3)
Challengers				
1982	2,033	11,696	3,369	1,971
N=	(9)	(1)	(26)	(6)
1984	9,650	--	4,146	7,236
N=	(10)		(19)	(13)
1986	17,177	1,667	15,039	28,776
N=	(9)	(2)	(17)	(1)
Open Seats				
1982	12,145	15,796	9,748	11,517
N=	(13)	(5)	(10)	(4)
1984	25,038	15,068	17,333	18,717
N=	(13)	(6)	(14)	(3)
1986	27,778	18,055	26,750	40,962
N=	(12)	(3)	(7)	(2)

Table 9. Median Expenditures, Male and Female Candidates by Party and Status, 1982-1986

	Democrats		Republicans	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Incumbents				
1982	$12,269	$20,878	$ 5,625	$ 9,471
N=	(37)	(1)	(7)	(3)
1984	14,485	12,877	12,093	8,894
N=	(31)	(7)	(10)	(2)
1986	20,565	16,979	24,378	15,814
N=	(19)	(5)	(11)	(3)
Challengers				
1982	2,353	11,058	3,285	2,218
N=	(9)	(1)	(26)	(6)
1984	9,515	--	4,146	6,899
N=	(10)		(19)	(13)
1986	22,656	843	14,792	28,128
N=	(9)	(2)	(17)	(1)
Open Seats				
1982	12,079	15,796	9,721	11,544
N=	(13)	(5)	(10)	(4)
1984	24,996	14,595	16,580	18,617
N=	(13)	(6)	(14)	(3)
1986	27,101	18,023	26,478	43,303
N=	(12)	(3)	(7)	(2)

Fundraising in Open Seat Primaries. Money may play an even more critical role in primary races, especially open seat contests. These campaigns are very much individualized efforts where party support and identification are not available. However, separating primary money from general election dollars for research purposes is difficult. Receipts and expenditures are not reported separately for these two contests (except for primary losers). But candidates are required to submit financial reports to the state's Campaign Finance Office 8 days before the primary.

These figures will be used to give us a rough estimate of the comparative funding of women's and men's campaigns in open seat primaries. Figures are available for 1984 through 1988. Only the Democrats had a sufficient number of contested open seat races to make any meaningful comparisons. In 1984, the women candidates raised a slightly higher median amount than the men ($5497, n=12, versus $5019, n=52). In 1986 and 1988, male candidates outpaced female candidates. The male contenders raised a median $7,831 (N=38) in 1986 and $9661 (N=39) in 1988. Women candidates raised a median $5235 (N=9) in 1986 and $8195 (N=9) in 1988. The gap narrowed in 1988. Whereas in 1986, women raised 66 perent of what men raised, in 1988 they raised 85 percent. On the average then this group of male candidates were advantaged. But the comparative success rates of the men and women reported above suggest that the finance gap did not produce a victory gap.

Large Contributions. Lack of connection to financial networks generally is believed to act as a structural barrier to women becoming part of the elected political elite. Women candidates, consequently, may be relatively successful fund raisers but may have to rely on the support of many small contributors; whereas their male counterparts may have greater access to large contributors. All donations over $50 must be reported individually in Massachusetts state elections. For analysis purposes, we consider all donations of $100 or more to be large donations. Tables 10 and 11 present the average number of large contributions male and female candidates in each of our status groups received, and the average total amount of contributions of

$100 or more each of these groups collected for 1984 and 1986.[30]

Table 10. Average Number of Large Contributions by Party, Candidate Status, and Sex

	Democrats		Republicans	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Incumbents				
1984	63	47	42	27
N =	(31)	(7)	(10)	(2)
1986	91	96	91	29
N =	(18)	(5)	(11)	(3)
Challengers				
1984	26	--	12	15
N =	(10)		(19)	(13)
1986	53	3	52	48
N =	(9)	(2)	(17)	(1)
Open Seats				
1984	62	31	37	61
N =	(13)	(6)	(14)	(3)
1986	81	56	62	49
N =	(12)	(3)	(7)	(2)

Table 11. Average Total Dollar Amount of Large Contributions by Candidate Status and Sex

		Democrats		Republicans	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
Incumbents					
1984		13,552	6,231	7,170	4,898
	N =	(31)	(7)	(10)	(2)
1986		16,010	13,271	16,269	5,757
	N =	(18)	(5)	(11)	(3)
Challengers					
1984		5,990	--	3,176	4,006
	N =	(10)		(19)	(13)
1986		12,638	700	13,106	22,102
	N =	(9)	(2)	(17)	(1)
Open Seats					
1984		12,582	7,644	12,684	18,467
	N =	(13)	(6)	(14)	(3)
1986		14,294	10,377	12,105	18,785
	N =	(12)	(3)	(7)	(2)

More often than not, the male candidates outdistanced the female candidates in similar situations in acquiring large donations, but this advantage is far from consistent throughout the groupings. Indeed, in 1986, female Democratic incumbents outpaced their male colleagues. In 1986, Democratic open seat female contenders increased their relative standing in total amounts raised from large contributions over 1984 from 61% to 71% of that of male candidates. At the same time, Republican female incumbents lagged further behind their male colleagues. But we have to keep in mind that these few women did handsomely at the polls, and their fellow female partisans in other categories consistently did better than their male counterparts. The small numbers of women in each status category preclude definitive

statements about the relative structure of male and female candidates' fundraising efforts. But we can certainly say that these women's campaigns were not consistently characterized by a lack of access to large contributions relative to their male colleagues.

Discussion

Research now shows that a tripartite situation characterizes women's campaigns for state legislatures: experiences on the campaign trail, numbers of women candidates, and political opportunity structures. Regarding experience, those who run do as well as their male counterparts. This has been shown quite consistently to be the case in a range of states. We can now say it characterizes women's campaigns in an urban setting, contrary to previous beliefs. More large state studies are needed, however, especially in competitive two-party environments. We also now have some information on the financial resource bases of men's and women's campaigns, which shows women candidates competing on a nearly equal basis. But the relationship between fundraising and gender in state legislative campaigns has only begun to be investigated with information from only two states (Massachusetts in the 1980s and Oklahoma in the 1970s).

The first leg of this tripartite situation emphasizes equality on the campaign trail. The second part, the small numbers of women candidates, however, limits the impact of this equality in campaign experiences in meaningful increases in the number of women legislators. Promoters of more women in public office looking at the results of this study may see the cup as

being both half full and half empty. On the one hand, those women who do run equal or surpass their male counterparts as fundraisers and voter getters. But women are less than 20 percent of the candidates and the lawmakers. Other studies, too, have pointed to the paucity of women candidates as a basic problem as opposed to disadvantages in campaigning (Welch, 1985). From a research perspective, we must develop a comparative resource base for examining the presence of women candidates. For example, how does an approximately 20 percent female presence among all candidates as found in Masschusetts compare with the situation in other states?

The third leg of this tripartite situation facing women office-seekers is the lack of a political opportunity structure conducive to expanding their presence in legislatures. The problem is finding an opportunity to mount a viable campaign because of the advantages of incumbency and the few open seats available in each election. The opportunity structure will be the major barrier to increasing the numbers of women state lawmakers as well as national lawmakers. In a state such as Masschusetts with its professional legislature each seat is highly coveted, and when an opportunity opens up, a hard fought battle ensues. The opportunity to "flood the ticket" seems elusive and a more representative assembly seems remote. Women's legislative membership will increase only incrementally. Negative campaign experiences appear not to be the problem. Aspiring women candidates must act strategically. Being prepared to take advantage of the few opportune situations that arise in each

election, starting early, pre-empting the competition with a display of fundraising ability and commitments of supporters will achieve political payoffs for women candidates.

It matters whether more women are elected to office. More women in public office means a political leadership with a wider variety of life experiences to bring to legislative debate. Women's presence as lawmakers serves as a symbol of expanding political influence. The women who serve in the Massachusetts General Court are leaving their mark. A woman chairs the very powerful Senate Ways and Means Committee. Women serve in leadership positions in the structures of both parties in the House. In 1972, they organized the Caucus of Women Legislators, which continues to play an active role in the legislative process, influencing both its agenda and committee and floor action. A highlight of the Caucus's impact was the pushing through of legislation in 1985 increasing welfare benefits above that recommended by both the House leadership and the executive branch.

Much of the conventional wisdom regarding women in public life has proven not to be empirically valid. Understanding the process by which women come to run for public office, how they run, and what happens when they campaign relative to male experiences is important. Equally important for those concerned with the linkage between campaigns for public office and the development of a democratic citizenry is an exploration of how men and women run for office. Women candidates may affect the electoral process by bringing different styles and approaches to campaigning. Thinking about both the similarities and the

differences of gender in the campaign process is a rich and significant research area.

FOOTNOTES

1. Tolchin, Susan and Martin Tolchin, Clout: Womanpower and Politics (New York: Putnam, 1973); Ruth Mandel, In The Running (New Haven, Connecticut: Ticknor and Fields, 1981).

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3. Darcy, R., Margaret Brewer, and Judy Clay, "Women in the Oklahoma Political System: State Legislative Elections," ocial Science Journal 21 (January, 1984): 67-78; Fowlkes, Diane, "Women in Georgia Electoral Politics: 1970-1978," Social Science Journal 21 (January, 1984): 43-55; Welch, Susan, Margery, Ambrosius, Janet Clark, and R. Darcy, "The Effect of Candidate Gender on Election Outcomes in State Legislative Races," Western Political Quarterly 38 (September, 1985).

4. Jacobs, Sally, "Ex-NOW Chief Focuses on Transforming Politics," Boston Globe (March, 1988): 29: 60.

5. Diamond, Irene, Sex Roles in the State House (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1977); Hill, David, 1981. "Political Culture and Female Political Representation," The Journal of Politics, 43: 159-168; Nechemias, Carol, "Changes in the Election of Women to U.S. Legislative Seats," Legislative Studies Quarterly 12 (February, 1987), 1987: 125-142; Darcy, Robert, "Why So Few Women in Public Office? A Look at Oklahoma Politics," in Gordon Weaver, ed., Southwest Cultural

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6. Jones, Woodrow and Albert Nelson, "Correlates of Women's Representation in Lower State Legislative Chambers," Social Behavior and Personality, 1 (1981): 9-15; Nechemias, "Changes in the Election of Women to U.S. Legislatures."

7. Diamond, Sex Roles in the State House; Rule, Wilma, "Why Women Don't Run: The Critical Contextual Factors in Women's Legislative Recruitment," Western Political Quarterly, 34: (1981): 60-77.

8. Diamond, Sex Roles in the State House.

9. See, however, Nechemias, "Changes in the Election of Women to U.S. Legislatures."

10. Center for the American Woman and Politics, National Information Bank on Women in Public Office, Eagleton Institue of Politics, Rutgers Universtiy, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

11. Werner, Emmy, "Women in State Legislatures," Western Political Quarterly, 11 (1968): 40-50; Diamond, Sex Roles in the State House; Rule, "Why Women Don't Run."

12. Diamond, Sex Roles in the State House.

13. Cooper, Kenneth, "Gender Gap Still Yawns Wide in Massachusetts," Boston Globe, (October 14, 1986): 1.

14. Burnham, Walter Dean, "The Turnout Problem," in A. James Reichley, editor, Elections American Style (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1987); p. 130.

15. Rule, "Why Women Don't Run."

16. Fowlkes, "Women in Georgia Electoral Politics."

17. Clark, Janet, R. Darcy, Susan Welch, and Margery Ambrosius. "Women as Legislative Candidates in Six States," in Janet

Flammang, ed. Political Women: Current Roles in State and Local Government (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1984): 149..

18. Welch, et al., "The Effect of Candidate Gender."

19. Rommey, Ronna and Beppie Harrison, Momentum: Women in American Politics Now (New York: Crown Publishers, 1987).

20. Some districts are composed of communities of different population categories. In such situations the district was classified according to its dominant size characteristic.

21. Because of the small number of women candidates especially when they are divided into subgroups all five electins were combined for this analysis. Contested and uncontested primaries were included in the analysis.

22. Darcy and Schramm, "When Women Run Against Men;" Fowlkes, "Women in Georgia Electoral Politics."

23. Bernstein, Robert, "Why Are There So Few Women in the House?" Western Political Quarterly 39 (March, 1986): 155-164.

24. The actual number of contested races may be overstated here. In at least one case, the male opponent of a female contender had actually dropped out of the race early in the primary season, but his name still appeared on the ballot. There may be other such cases.

25. Burrell, Barbara, 1985. "Women's and Men's Campaigns for the U.S. House of Representatives, 1972-1982: A Finance Gap?", American Politics Quarterly 13 July: 251-272; Burrell, "The Political Opportunity Structure."

26. An exception is Darcy et al., "Women inthe Oklahomo Political System."

27. Jones, Ruth, "Financing State Elections," in Michael Malbin, editor, Money and Politics in the United States Chatham, New Jersey: Chatham House Publishers, 1984).

28. Jewell, Malcolm, and Samuel Patterson, The legislative Process in the United States, New York: Random House, 1986).

29. These figures represent the overall financial status of the campaigns. We have not controlled for primary spending.

30. A refined analysis of large contributions has not been undertaken here. This category includes candidate contributions to their own campaigns unless specifically marked as a loan, party and PAC contributions as well as individual contributions.